



Vital and Viable Project Review

2020/22

Welcome

The Vital and Viable project came into being in late 2019 when East Lindsey District Council began taking steps to better support its inland market towns, acknowledging that they didn't benefit from the direct support that the district's coastal strip receives through the Lincolnshire Coastal Destination Business Improvement District, and the potential that Mablethorpe and Skegness had to receive additional funding having been included in the Government's Towns Fund Initiative.

The Institute of Place Management (IPM) were commissioned to deliver their Vital and Viable Town Centres workshops in Alford, Horncastle, Louth and Spilsby. Over 300 attended these workshops. At each of them the community passion was readily apparent, and it was clear that these members of the community had defined ideas of what made their town special and what they wanted to see happen in their area. Following these sessions, the IPM produced reports about each town centre, which are available to read here: www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/vitalandviable

As the project began to gain momentum, the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Council officers were deployed to deliver Covid-19 business grants. Upon resuming work on the programme in Autumn 2020, we were able to create an action plan for each town centre, before the impacts of the pandemic unfortunately led to officers needing to facilitate business grants again in winter 2020.

These plans collate all the feedback received across the engagement workshops and the projects that each community aspires to see in their town; ensuring that, as and when funding opportunities come up, we're well equipped to know what the local priorities are in each town and which projects should be included. The action plans also allow us to focus on key elements and themes for the year ahead.

As part of the work to support the recovery of the economy from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Government introduced schemes to support town centres and high streets across the country. This began in mid-2020 with the introduction of the Reopening the High Street Safely grant fund and was followed in 2021 by the Welcome Back fund. Thanks to the networks and relationships we have developed through the Vital and Viable programme, we have been able to support town councils, business partnerships and town centre community organisations, to deliver economic support through these schemes and help to directly support the recovery of our high streets. We are also pleased to be welcoming Wainfleet to the Vital and Viable family.



A message from Adam Grist, Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy:

"The pandemic has been an extremely difficult time for our town centres, but we have been amazed by the resilience and determination we've seen from our business community and volunteers. High street recovery is more important now than it has ever been, and the Covid-19 Pandemic has allowed us to form strong partnerships within our communities and we hope to see these flourish in the future. We remain committed to delivering the best for our market towns and will do all we can to see them thriving well into the future, as we recognise they are a key driver for our local economy. I want to offer my thanks to everybody who has played a part in the Vital and Viable project to date. Our strength comes in numbers, and the number of committed people our team meets and works with every week is commendable."



Meet the Team

In July 2020, East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council formed a Strategic Alliance, which saw both organisations share a joint Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team and both councils are also working to merge their respective workforces. In August 2021 Boston Borough, East Lindsey and South Holland District Councils formally signed off on plans to create an ambitious new partnership - the largest such partnership of councils in the country. Whilst each council continues to be politically independent and accountable to the communities they serve, the three councils are working collectively, supported by a shared management team and workforce, to deliver on their aspirations for their communities and to tackle common challenges.

The newly formed Place Team was established in December 2021. The team is a mix of ELDC and Boston colleagues, with a shared vision to ensure our areas are great places to live, work and visit.



Sam – Place Officer (Market Towns)

My role is to support East Lindsey's market towns to remain great places to live, work and visit. I coordinate the Vital and Viable project and help volunteers and organisations to deliver outcomes based in each town's action plan.

Samantha.Phillips@e-lindsey.gov.uk



Karen – Place Officer (Tourism)

My role is to oversee tourism for East Lindsey, with a specific focus on the Lincolnshire Wolds. I manage the Love Lincolnshire Wolds brand and related campaigns, including the web platform and social media. I am also the project lead for the Lincolnshire Wolds Outdoor Festival, which launches this Spring.

Karen.Edwards@e-lindsey.gov.uk



Emilie Wales – Heritage Manager

My role primarily provides specialist conservation advice on planning applications and enforcement cases which involve heritage assets in East Lindsey. However, I also proactively monitor Boston and East Lindsey to identify, encourage, deliver, and monitor investment in our heritage, including our historic town centres, many of which are already designated as conservation areas.

Emilie.Wales@e-lindsey.gov.uk

We have also worked with a number of colleagues across the Council to achieve the outcomes we have in 2021.

Shared themes and outcomes across all our Vital and Viable town centres...

Covid-19 Business Grants

Officers in the Economic Growth Team have worked extremely hard during the pandemic to deliver the Covid-19 business grants, which have directly benefitted high street shops and businesses in our market towns. The team have dealt with around 5,500 enquiries and distributed in the region of £103m via 23,400 direct grants to businesses in East Lindsey since March 2020. Administering these grants has allowed the team direct contact with businesses, thus growing our networks. The grant delivery process has been audited by Assurance Lincolnshire with a High Assurance standard.

Tidying our Town Centres

We worked with town councils and community groups to support and offer publicity for four town tidy days as part of the Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean, attracting over 40 volunteers to take part across the market towns, also working with our colleagues in the Neighbourhoods Team to supply litter picking equipment for this initiative. We're committed to supporting similar initiatives in the future.

We worked with groups in Louth and Horncastle to hang new bunting up in the streets ready for the town centre reopening back in April.

We worked with Town Councils in Louth, Horncastle and Spilsby to get all town centre bollards painted ready for the shops reopening back in April.

To celebrate the businesses who make a big effort to keep their shop frontages tidy and attractive we launched spring and winter shop front competitions. These not only give businesses free publicity but also encourage shop owners who go the extra mile to keep their frontages looking good.





Taking care of our Historic Buildings

It is important to monitor the condition of conservation areas and listed buildings to identify any trends or risks which may pose a threat to their long-term preservation. Conservation areas should also be reviewed to ensure that an area still justifies such status and, from time to time, to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement.

Conservation Area Appraisals (CAAs) are used to assess our conservation areas and formulate recommendations, such as making changes to boundaries, taking action on untidy sites, or restricting permitted development so that changes to properties can be controlled through the planning system. As part of a prioritisation process, our Heritage Manager and Heritage Champion, Councillor David Mangion, have visited our Conservation Areas to carry out smaller rapid assessments to identify any obvious concerns. These have been completed for all our market towns and we will now look to secure funding to carry out the appraisals in full, in order to better understand our town centres and provide us with evidence in future funding applications.

Specialist Retail Support

Healthy You, Healthy Business is a bespoke project that we commissioned in April to support the recovery of the High Street. The project, which has been delivered by the Rural Retailer, saw a successful pilot scheme delivered in Alford and Spilsby with 20 businesses benefitting from support, including a business health check which incorporated a diagnostic report, focusing on everything from staff wellbeing to marketing and stock reviews. The project has seen some businesses receiving a rebrand, new town centre events launched, a total business refit, and improved social media presences.

The project has now been rolled out in Horncastle with 10 businesses receiving support. A new contract with Claire Bailey The Retail Champion is taking place in Louth for the remainder of 2022.

Healthy YOU Healthy Business

■ Sales not stacking up? ■ Social media making you feel anti-social?

■ Stuck in a retail rut? ■ Confused by Covid-19?

Ready for a business health check?

Retailers in Alford and Spilsby high-streets are invited to enrol their business and team on a three part, action packed journey with Rural Retailer.

The sessions will focus on branding, wellbeing and sales – the three main areas proven to be weak areas in businesses. Participating businesses will complete a business 'Super Sales Workout' and receive an action plan to help your business grow, along with dedicated support from three leading business specialists.

Get in touch to hear more - Ophelia Gamble, The Rural Retailer
Email: opheliameansbusiness@gmail.com | Mobile: 07807 782469

And best of all it's FREE!

Healthy You Healthy Business

CASE STUDY - The Green House

The Green House - Case Study

SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Social Media Content and templates, scheduled posting
- Business Diagnostic
- Newsletter ideas, content and promos
- Stocktake Templates
- Staff training and Support
- Re-design of shop interior
- Window and display training
- 'Lives' on Social Media
- Support for the owner to take control of the business
- Covid-19 Assessment
- Opening of new shop by Mayor
- New Logo, Brand Assets, Design, Signage, Swing tickets



Before



©Healthy You Healthy Business 2021



The Green House - Case Study

The Green House is a well established presence on Spilsby high street with an enthusiastic and experienced team. The shop offers an excellent choice of well known brands and knowledgeable staff are always on hand with helpful advice. The exterior and layout of the shop had not changed in many years and was ready for a fresh, new and innovative look.

The owners were open to a complete rebrand and repositioning of the business to attract a new and wider customer base.

Working with a heritage palette, we created a brand that would nestle well within Spilsby's historic setting whilst giving The Green House the look and feel of an upmarket fashion boutique to rival any found in a major city.



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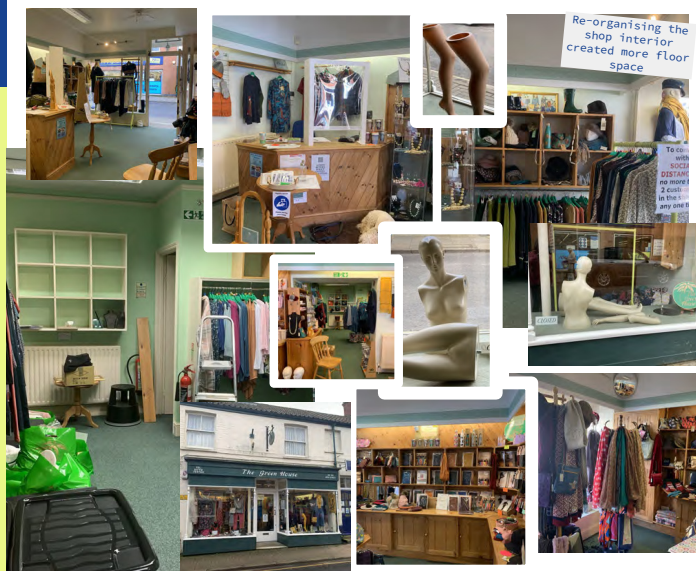
Windows & Interiors

Support included:

- Window Dressing Guidance
- Covid-19 Assessment with a package of posters to support the new changes
- Merchandising Support working with the team to complete the shop in time for opening
- Sourcing Support for the new shop fittings



©Healthy You Healthy Business 2021



Windows & Interiors

Support included:
Time spent working alongside the team to build their confidence and belief in their own abilities.



Branding

Support included:

- Visit and Brand Evaluation
- Logo Re-Brand
- Brand Guides
- Swing Tags
- Packaging Ideas
- Stickers



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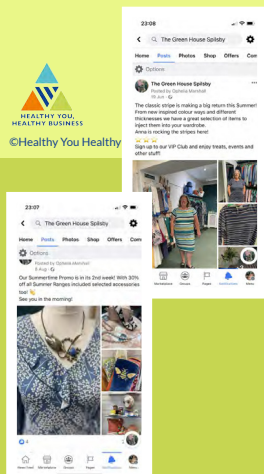
Social Media Posts

Support included:

- Wider Audience Posting to increase engagement
- Product Photography, content writing, posting on own page
- Increased Audience and growth of local support
- Confidence in posting and provide content ideas



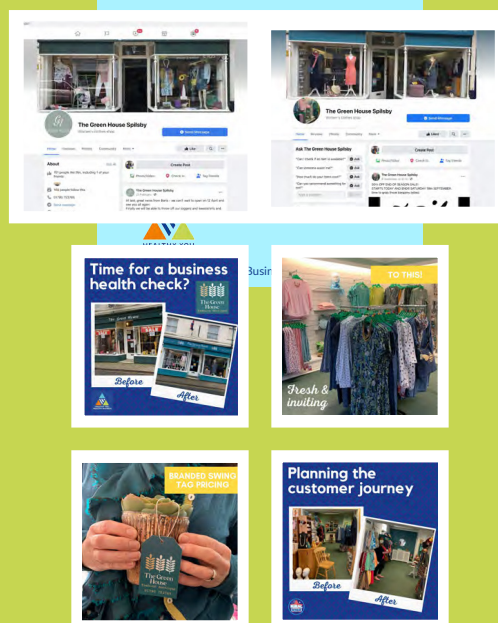
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Social Media

Support included:

- Profile Graphics
- Banners
- Marketing Campaigns



Signage

Support included:

- Artist's Impression demonstrating the transformative effect of new signage
- Sourcing of Signage company and project management of installation
- Invitation to Mayor to open shop



Funding Opportunities

The Town Centre Action Plans have allowed us to have a good working knowledge of what is needed in our market towns. We have been able to include some of these aspirations in funding opportunities this year.

The Reopening the High Street Safely Fund and Welcome Back Fund were two Government initiatives launched during the pandemic recovery. Both schemes aimed to encourage people back into town centres, with a focus on improvements to the public realm and cleanliness alongside events and activities to safely draw footfall back into town centres. We are pleased to have worked alongside our market town councils, who served as delivery partners for these schemes, to ensure that the funding directly supported projects which reflected local need. We received £226,000 through the Welcome Back Fund which officers have been working to distribute across the district.

Reopening the High Street Safely

£48,063.86 was spent across the market towns and included funding the following:

- Lincs FM radio campaign
- Banners
- Outdoor seating
- Specialist retail business advisor (Spilsby & Alford)
- Bunting
- Hand sanitising stations
- Moveable planters
- Safety message campaign videos
- Newsletters

Welcome back to the High Street adverts in publications

Welcome Back Fund allocations to Town Councils:

- Alford £12,000
- Horncastle £25,000
- Louth £25,000
- Spilsby £10,000
- Wainfleet £12,000

Levelling Up Bid

In June 2022 we submitted an ambitious £10million bid to the second round of the Government's Levelling Up Fund, which is designed to secure capital investment in infrastructure that has the potential to improve lives and give people pride in their communities. The fund being one component of the Government 'Levelling Up' ambition.

The bid will feature the regeneration of Alford through a series of investments in its heritage infrastructure, creating a new millwright visitor experience and enhancing the destination assets of the Manor House, the asset transfer and restoration of Alford Windmill and its visitor café and holiday accommodation.

The Spilsby Sessions House would also be funded to bring the building back into use as a theatre. The maintaining, regenerating and creatively repurposing this heritage asset to create a new community-owned space to support the arts and serve as cultural space. This will enable the Sessions House to host training programmes which would be developed to encourage residents, especially younger people, to engage with culture. The listed building also has a significant place in history, for its past use as a jail, and funding would allow the building's old police cells to be opened to the public.

We await a decision on our application.

Markets

Our markets are at the heart of our market towns and as a council, we are committed to their longevity. We acknowledge the importance of our market traders and have taken part in a number of initiatives and campaigns to support them, such as free promotion for all new traders via our social channels and running our in-house competition to find the District's favourite market trader, which this year was won by Amanda Brown Glass Design who trades on Louth and Horncastle markets. We have also participated in national campaigns such as the Great British Food Fortnight, Love Your Local Market and the NABMA vote for Britain's Favourite Market.



We've also used Welcome Back funding to purchase new gazebos for our Spilsby market, additional market stalls for Wainfleet and are going to be funding new covers for Alford's market stalls. The fund has also been used to provide additional entertainment on specialist market days.

Welcome Back Fund allocation to Markets:

- Alford new covers £3,247.20
- Wainfleet – 6 gazebos £2,205.00 and weights £695.00
- Also funded #Loveyourmarket campaign material - £2,000.00



Events

A shared theme across all our market towns has been the need to improve events and town centre activities. We have done this by empowering local groups to deliver their own initiatives. We have seen some great new markets emerge, as well as trails and live music. We have used Welcome Back funding to purchase equipment and buy in entertainment to support over 40 events and pop up entertainment to take place this year.



Young People

Encouraging young people into our town centres is a key aspiration for the team and this year we trialled some half-term activities in our marketplaces to tie into the Love Your Local Market campaign. We worked with our partners - the Lincolnshire YMCA and Lincolnshire Nature Lab - to deliver some family friendly activities to complement market days in all our Vital and Viable towns during the October half term.



Improving Culture

Improving the cultural offer in our town centres is another big aspiration for us – we don't believe our rural market towns should miss out on big experiences and ideas. We are pleased to have worked with A Different Light Collective, part of Spilsby Sessions House, in winter 2020 and 2021 on Hope and Light and Festive Fabuloso. Both projects encouraged the communities in our market towns to be part of a unique piece of artwork and then used light and projectors to bring their work to life as part of a film displayed in the town centres.

Hope and Light saw over 1000 completed pieces of community artwork projected onto key town centre buildings over the month of Dec 2020. A way of bringing the community together in our town centres while we have to keep apart to stay safe.

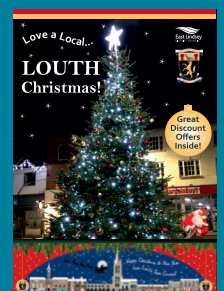
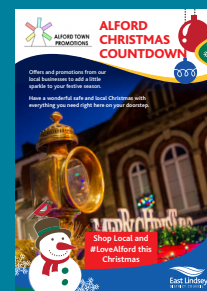
Festive Fabuloso saw 12 events take place across our market towns with an interactive organ and street theatre.

These projects make town centres feel alive and can be a big driver for footfall. We hope to make a bid to the Arts Council in future years to further develop this project.

Christmas

Christmas has been a difficult time during the pandemic. This has been felt by our town centre businesses with shoppers being less inclined to use their local high street, instead choosing to shop online. We are pleased to have worked with partners to support a number of initiatives in each town through the Welcome Back Fund. This includes additional markets, Horncastle's Window Wonderland (a festive window trail which saw over 100 participants take part) and additional pop up entertainment.

We also worked with Louth Town Council to produce a Christmas shopping guide we printed 15,000 copies which were hand delivered to Louth homes by volunteers. We also worked with Alford Town Promotions to produce a Christmas Countdown booklet, we printed 3,800 which were hand delivered by volunteers to Alford homes.




Communications

We said that we would work on improving communicating with communities in our Vital and Viable towns and to do so we have begun issuing regular newsletters to keep people up to date with what is happening in their town. You can read our previous newsletters and sign up to receive our newsletters by visiting our website www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/vitalandviable.

We have worked hard to strengthen our relationships with our town centre partners and have been delighted to be asked to join several forums and town meetings, so we are able to keep up to date with activities in each town and communicate our plans and initiatives.


We said we would hold an annual town meeting in each of our towns but due to the pandemic we decided this wasn't the best option. Instead, we ran a Vital and Viable Roadshow where we visited each market town during a market day and ran a survey to gather people's feedback on how they view their town centres. We received 830 responses. We have found this approach invaluable and believe we managed to speak with a wider variety of people using this method. We intend to undertake the roadshow and the survey every year moving forwards, with our survey results acting as a benchmark each year to help define our key areas of focus when planning for the year ahead.

East Lindsey District Council... working with Louth



Have your say on your market town

We've launched a new survey to help us understand how you feel about where you live and what you would like to see happen in your market town as we look to ensure that our priorities for each town reflects what the local community want.

So please spare a few minutes to complete it bit.ly/VandVsurvey  image.

This weekend sees us take our Vital and Viable project on tour around the market towns we have been working with. Please do come along and say hi. We will have paper copies of the survey available. You are also welcome to leave us leaflets to hand out about any projects you are working on in our inland market towns.

The dates for the Vital and Viable market roadshows are:

- Wainfleet, 17th September 2021
- Horncastle, 18th September 2021
- Spilsby, 20th September 2021
- Alford, 24th September 2021
- Louth, 25th September 2021

We hope to see you there!

Still time to enter the Louth Art Trail Competition


The newly-launched Louth Art Trail Action Group is challenging residents to 'hit the trail' and seek out the sculptures, get inspired and draw, paint, or photograph the artworks and their locations. There are some amazing prizes up for grabs. See poster for details.

For more information on the competitions and membership of the group, visit the official Facebook Page at: www.facebook.com/groups/loutharttrailactiongroup.


The group can also be contacted by email on LAActiongroup@gmail.com

How well do you know Louth?
HIT THE TRAIL
Discover art, have fun
and you could win a prize!

Kids - Create a painting or drawing or take a photograph of one of the art trail sculptures.
Adults - Take a photograph of one of the pieces of sculpture which comprise the Louth Art Trail.



Closing date for entries 26th September 2021.

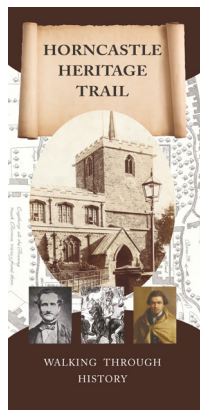
For full details visit:  **Louth Art Trail Action Group**

Many thanks to these local Louth sponsors:
Benetton Delicatessen • Crackpot • Fur Your Walls
McKinellis Photography • John Taylors

Tourism

Hosting press trips

- Daily Mail in April (www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/escape/article-9505219/Exploring-Lincolnshire-Wolds-bucolic-landscape-weeping-willow-rolling-fields-wheat.html),
- Girl About blog in August (<https://girlabout.co.uk/lincolnshire-wolds-holiday-alternative-to-the-cotswolds/>)
- Cycling UK for the August/September edition
- OK and Saturday Magazine (Mirror, Express, Star) visited at the end of August
- Sunday Express visited in September



Literature

We were delighted to work with Horncastle Walkers are Welcome and the Horncastle History and Heritage Society on the production of the Horncastle Heritage Trail leaflet which is now in circulation.

Filming

We are excited to be launching a new promotional video for our market towns in 2022. Filming took place over the summer and we would like to thank all the volunteers who took part!

Getting social

We have created four sister social media accounts that link to our main Love Lincs Wolds brand. Love Alford, Love Horncastle, Love Louth, and Love Spilsby provide the perfect channel to share localised content, including high street business information and to support town centre events. We encourage all business to use #lovealford, #lovehorncastle, #lovelouth or #lovespilsby when posting content they would like us to share.



Environment

Green Homes Grants

Phase 2 of Green Homes Grants funding is now underway. Phase 2 will support approximately 120 properties, with a focus on Louth and Horncastle for this round. The scheme provides energy efficiency improvements to domestic properties where the Energy Performance Certificate rating is currently E, F or G and where the combined household income is less than £30k per year. Up to £10,000 is available for privately owned properties and £5,000 available to private rental properties with landlords expected to contribute one-third of the cost of works. A further bid has been submitted to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to enable a further phase of grants to be available in 2022. Phase 2 is currently fully subscribed but enquiries are being welcomed from across East Lindsey for the next phase. To find more about project, please visit: www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/GreenHomesGrant

Community Orchards – Growing the Network

Following the successful development of ten new community orchards across East Lindsey in 2021, further funding has been secured from Natural England to extend this in 2022. The orchards are intended to get local people involved with managing their orchard, helping to improve the local environment, promote heritage varieties of Lincolnshire fruit trees and bring health and wellbeing benefits to local residents. A number of sites are currently under consideration for the extension of the scheme, including locations in Alford and Spilsby.



A look at what has been achieved in each town centre...

Alford

■ Craft Market investment

We were able to commit match funding of £5,000, alongside funding from Lincolnshire County Council, to help Alford Craft Market realise their ambition of taking over a redundant building in the marketplace and transforming it into a gallery space. The space is truly an excellent addition to Alford and helps to cement the arts and craft theme the town is renowned for.



■ Alford Manor House investment

We have offered grant support to the value of £7875,00 for the Manor House to commission an architect to look into the possibility of creating a permanent event space for the building, which would be sympathetic to its Grand 2 listing. This space would strengthen the future of the Manor House, which is one of the key attractions in Alford.



■ Shop Frontage Makeovers for the Marketplace

Improvements to Alford Marketplace shop fronts was an ambition within the Alford action plan. We were able to re-use the underspend to the value of £3,699 from the Council's previous Shop Front Grant Scheme to focus on five properties surrounding the marketplace.



■ Support for the first Alford Music and Arts Festival 2022

We were delighted to offer a grant payment of £5,000 to Alford Town Council to support the inaugural festival. This saw a team of volunteers coordinating a number of activities and opportunities for people to enjoy over a three day event in July. This ties into the key theme our stakeholders thought should be used to promote the town.



Horncastle

■ Improving the Street Scene

We supported the Horncastle Trade Association and the town council to purchase a pressure washer to be used alongside their street cleaning efforts.

The red telephone boxes in the marketplace were also in desperate need of maintenance, so officers were able to contact BT and ensure they were on their maintenance plan for 2021.



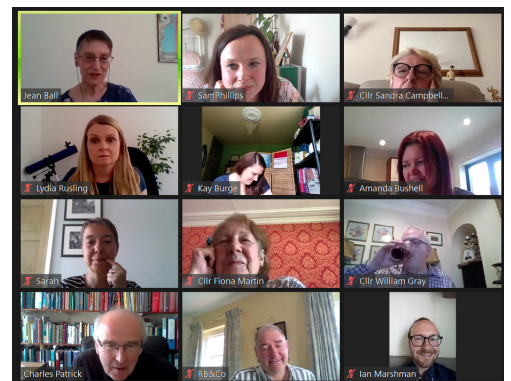
■ Signage Audit

Volunteers have worked with officers to create a first draft of a signage audit for the town centre. This audit fed into the purchase of two 'Welcome to Horncastle' boards from the Welcome Back Fund. The team have also decided on some window graphics for two empty properties. The audit will now be used by the Town Council's Highway Committee to see what additional actions can be taken. We are in discussions with Wilmot Dixon to support with the installation of some of these signs as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility linked to the Horncastle Public Hub build.



■ High Street Task Force

Horncastle was selected as one of only 70 towns in the United Kingdom to receive specialist support for the Government's High Street Task Force. Community and business representatives have taken part in a workshop which will lead to specialist tailored support taking place in 2022. This is a great way of raising the profile of Horncastle and the wider local area. Being able to connect to this national Government led scheme will help us to develop evidence for future funding bids and equip us with knowledge to support our town centres in the future.



■ Lovehorncastle.com

A key aspiration from our Horncastle group sessions was a website for the town to promote the excellent range of stores on the high street and things for visitors to do. We are pleased to announce that we launched lovehorncastle.com this year, the first of the market town sister sites to Lovelincswolds.com. Community volunteers have supported with the site design and content and we have delivered a local soft launch marketing campaign including window stickers, posters and postcards for shops. We now plan to roll out this approach to our other market towns.



■ Horncastle Mural

Officers have supported a group of volunteers in Horncastle to work up a design brief, choose a location and seek funding for a special welcome mural, which will celebrate the town's history. Funding was sought from The Welcome Back Fund and The Mighty Creatives which saw 22 young people take part in gaining an Arts Award Certificate as part of the project. Two market engagement days were run in late spring to gather people's thoughts on what the mural should contain, people were also invited to have a go at using spray paint on a pop up wall. The mural painting took place over three days where the community were invited to take part in the painting.

■ Teenage Market

Part of the High Street Task Force support for Horncastle was a two year licence for the Teenage Market. Our first event took place in July 2022 with a follow up event in Oct. Each event saw stalls fully booked by traders under the age of 25, with entertainment provided by Banovallum School. Some young traders even took up an opportunity over the summer holidays to trade of the regular market as a result. The Teenage Markets will begin again in Spring 2023.



Louth

■ Café Culture in the Cornmarket

Worked with businesses in the Cornmarket to help them apply to Lincolnshire County Council for relevant licences and road closures.

Supported the Louth Independent Traders to access funding for barriers, seating, and signage.

The scheme has now become part of the Lincolnshire County Council led Active Travel Fund Scheme, a national Government initiative to encourage more walking and cycling to support the environment and wellbeing.



Louth - contd

■ Bus Station Improvements

The Institute of Place Management noted the Bus Station was unwelcoming and uninviting - of which the Louth Stakeholders agreed in our follow up meetings. We have delivered much needed maintenance and cleaning works on the site and installed six new benches, new Welcome signage, and new planters which will be managed by Louth Town Council. The total investment value was £26,500.

■ Craft and Flea Market

Developed a partnership with a local company called Tyme Flyes to deliver a series of Sunday markets to complement the Café Culture initiative over the summer.

The cancellation of the traditional Christmas Market in Louth allowed Tyme Flyes to work with the Louth Independent Traders to deliver three smaller festive markets, supported by the Welcome Back Fund.

■ Louth Art Trail Action Group Formed

Officers are committed to supporting the Action group and have committed to support with design and print of a promotional leaflet.

■ Support for Zero Degrees Festival

It was a pleasure to support the Zero Degrees Festival to deliver their Pop-Up Festival initiatives this year. It was clear that the pandemic wasn't going to allow the festival to work in its usual form, so the Welcome back Fund supported the festival team to explore other ways of making it happen including music in the Cornmarket to support the outdoor seating, pop-up events in Spout Yard and a half term activity.

"After cancelling our festival in 2020, the Zero Degrees committee wanted to make sure we could support artists and the local community as we all emerged from the pandemic. The funding from East Lindsey and the Welcome Back Fund gave us the certainty and ability to programme a wide range of free pop-up events and bring some much needed culture back to Louth."

■ Empty shop window graphics

Two long term empty properties along Upgate were identified as potential locations for some window graphics to help improve the look of the street scene. We worked with volunteers from Louth Museum and the Louth Art Trail Action Group to develop displays to celebrate the town.



Spilsby

■ Heritage Signage Project

Plans are now underway to deliver a heritage shop signage project to give high street shops a uniform signage look, which celebrates the town's history around Sir John Franklin.

■ Support for Franklin Day 2021

Spilsby hosted its first Franklin Day in 2021, which we supported with flags for businesses. We are excited to see how this event will develop in future years as we are committed to celebrating Franklin's heritage through our tourism efforts.

■ Spilsby Summer Market 2021

Another first for Spilsby saw the launch of their first Summer Time Market and we were able to use Welcome Back funding to support the event.

■ Support for Sessions House

The Institute of Place Management agreed that the Spilsby Sessions House should be a high priority for Spilsby, so officers remain in regular contact with the project team. We have helped them to grow their cultural offer by commissioning them to deliver the Christmas cultural activity in our market towns. We also included the developments for Spilsby Sessions House in our Levelling Up Fund bid to Government.

■ Event Development

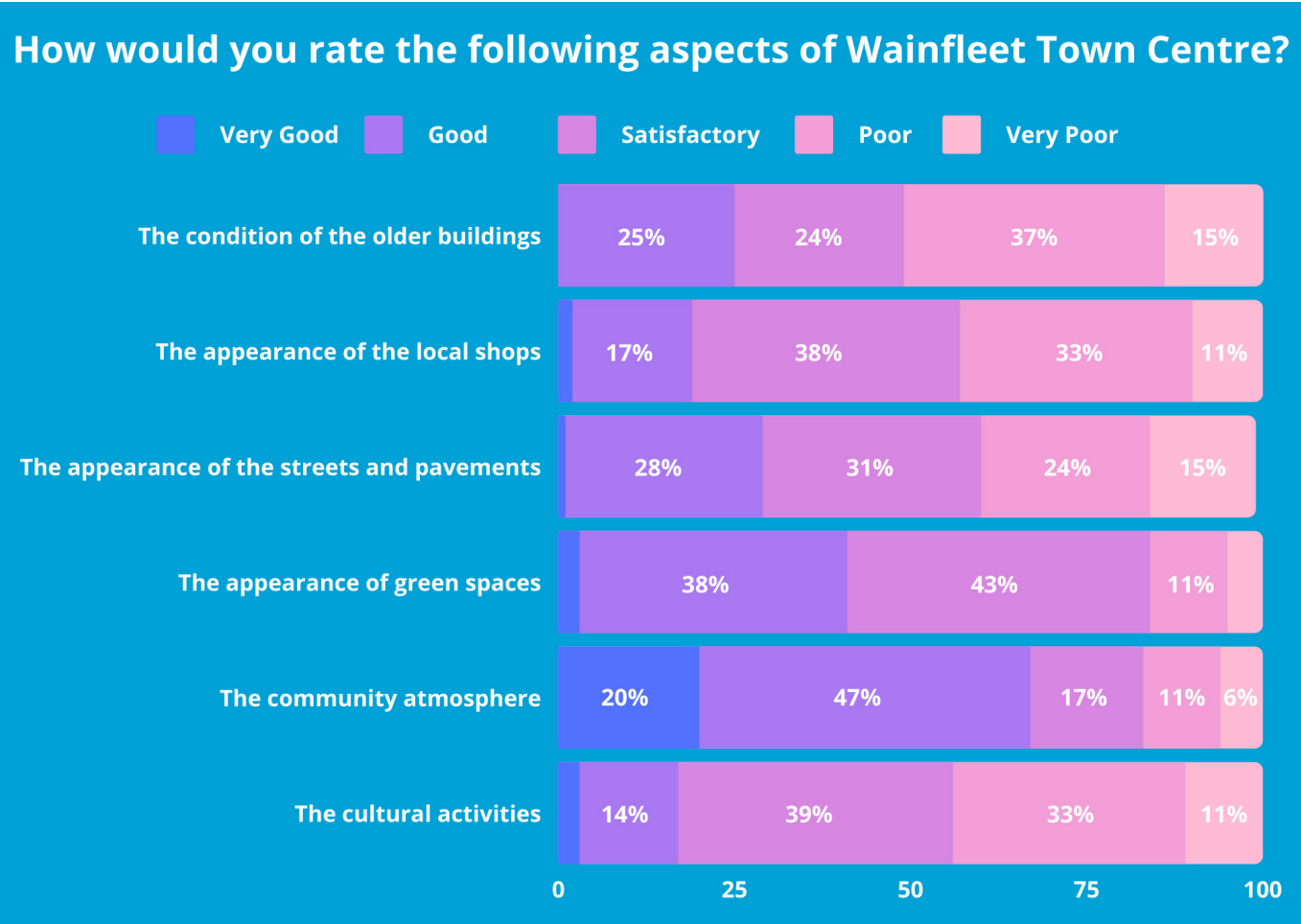
We are delighted to be working with a team of passionate volunteers within the town centre who are keen to develop a programme of events for the town. We have been pleased to financially contribute to Spilsby's first 60s Saturday in June 2022 and Spilsby's first Heritage Day in Sept 2022. The group is currently formalising itself to ensure they can access further funding.



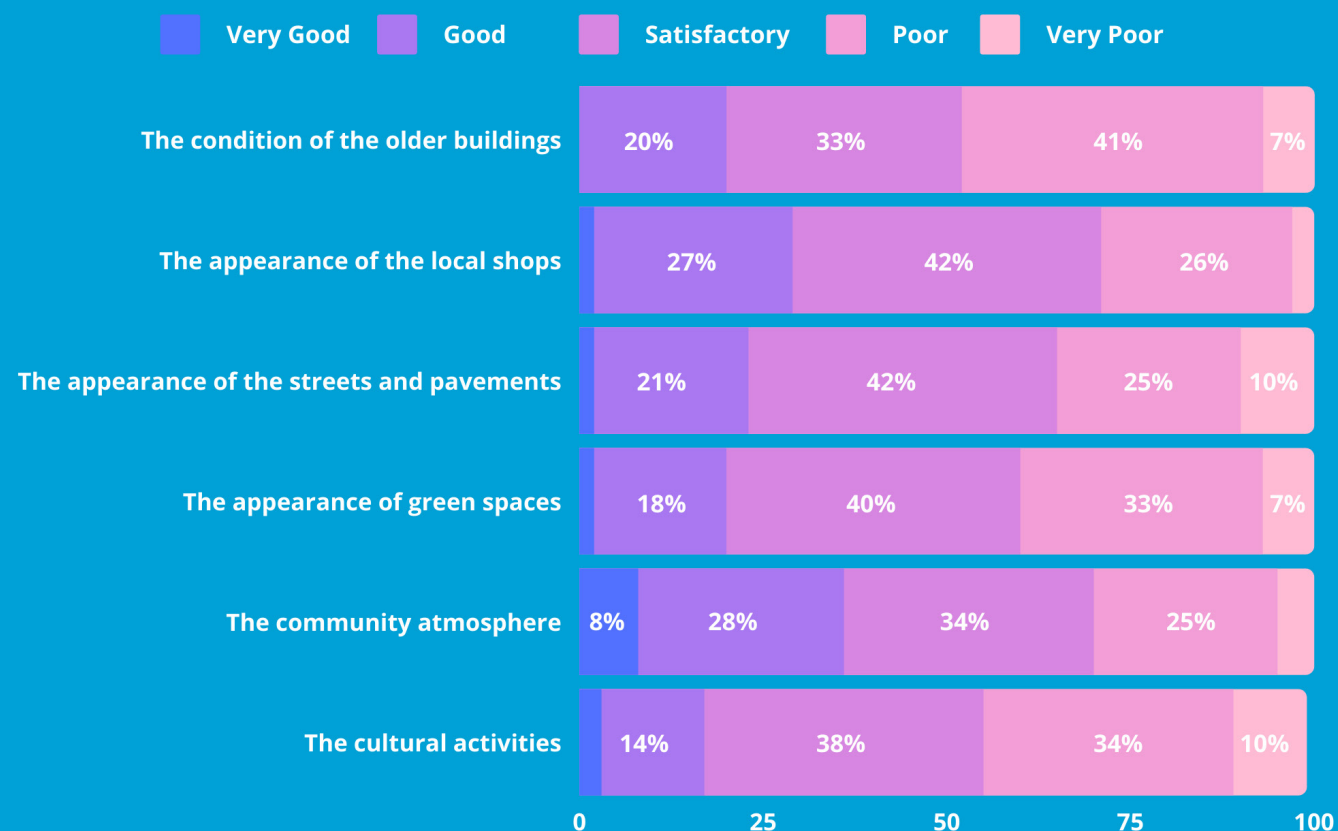
Looking to the future...

How do people feel about their town centres?

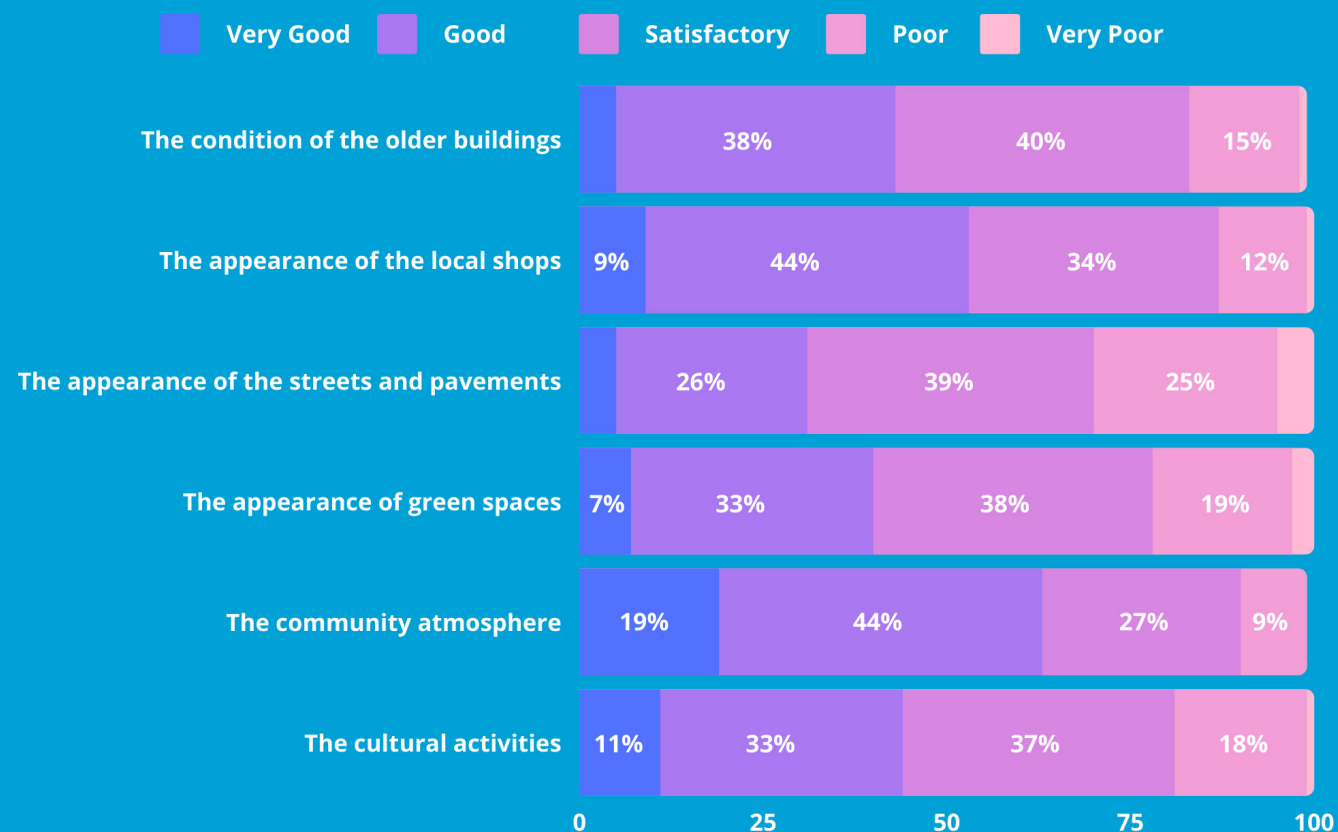
Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our Market Town survey in Autumn 2021, here is a look at the results.



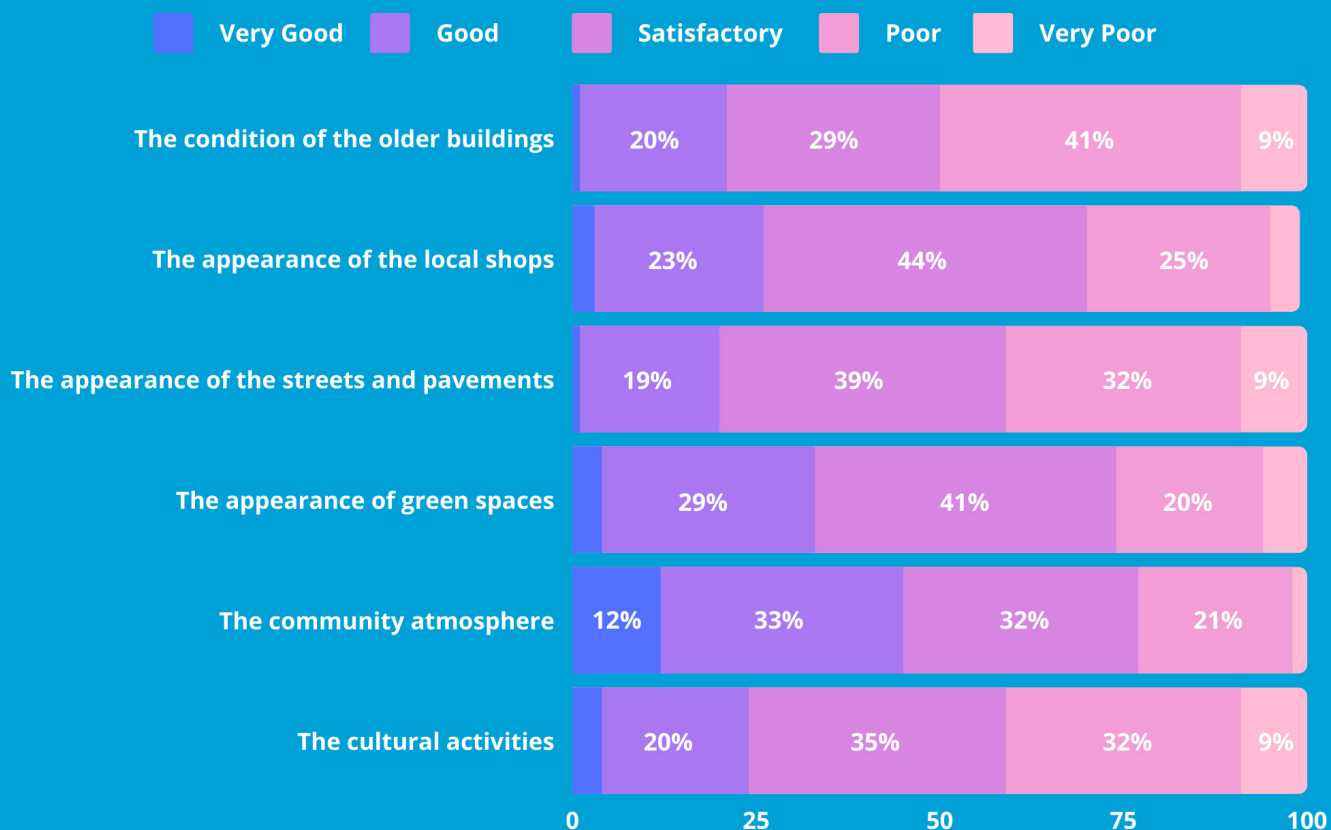
How would you rate the following aspects of Spilsby Town Centre?



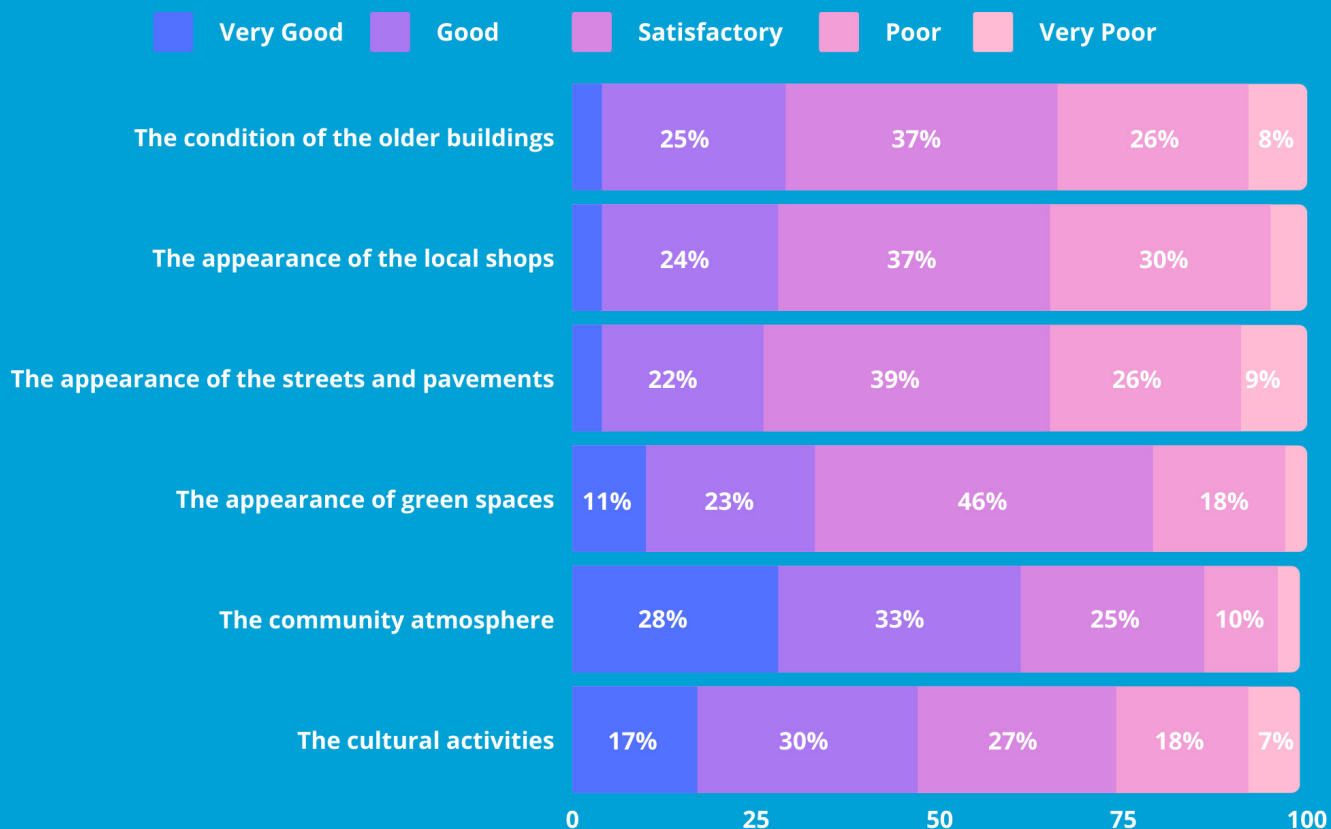
How would you rate the following aspects of Louth Town Centre?



How would you rate the following aspects of Horncastle Town Centre?



How would you rate the following aspects of Alford Town Centre?



What you can expect to see in the future

The Place Team have reviewed their focus for the Vital and Viable project and officer time will be focused on the following areas:

Improved public realm – We aim to work with volunteers in each town centre to create a public realm audit and work with the relevant authorities to make improvements. We will look to secure funding to deliver a shop front grant scheme and work with partners and landlords to display window graphics in long term empty shops.

Cultural activities and events – We will continue to empower members of our community to run events and initiatives to boost footfall in our high streets. We are committed to seeking funding to deliver events and cultural activities with a particular focus on engaging young people with their town centres.

East Lindsey District Council has been allocated £4.4 million through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Our Business Case for delivering our allocation is currently being reviewed by Government but it is anticipated this fund will strengthen the Vital and Viable programme to allow further delivery in our town centres.

We recognise that we are a small team and to achieve success, we'll need the support of the partners and volunteers who work hard on the ground to make these projects happen. If you would like to be part of the Vital and Viable programme - or have an idea for a town centre initiative - then please get in touch.

